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Honorable Council President and Council Members,

Thank you for expediting the list of Council Member questions in consideration of the half-cent sales tax on behalf of the students of Duval County. To provide you with an expedient response, we have consolidated the questions around common themes. Many of the responses to questions have been provided in previous correspondence; however, this document provides us with the opportunity to respond to your questions within one record. Within those responses, we have referenced ancillary documents for additional information, should council members require more detail.

In an effort to provide a timely response and in recognition of the urgency of moving this issue forward, this document is primarily focused on those questions directly related to the referendum.

While we understand that some of this information may be relatively new to several Council Members, the School Board and District staff have been immersed in this issue for several years. After a thorough facilities review and forecasting of future capital funding, the Duval County School Board passed a resolution with a legally sufficient plan. Rest assured your elected School Board has done its due diligence in vetting this plan.

Our goal in providing responses to these questions is to assist the City Council with placing this on the ballot. It is our hope that we can resolve any lingering questions and work collaboratively on bringing this most important referendum to the voters.

For your convenience, a copy of the Master Facilities Plan is attached. Feel free to contact me should you desire to meet and discuss this matter further.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Diana L. Greene", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Diana L. Greene, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

MASTER FACILITIES PLAN

(Response to: *Hazouri, Item 1; Bowman, Items 4 & 11; Wilson, Items 1, 2, & 5; DeFoor, Items 1, 2, & 3; Diamond, Items 2, 3, 8, 9, & 10; Ferraro, Item 10; Cumber, Items 3 & 4; Freeman, Item 2 & 4; Pittman, Items 2 & 5*)

School Districts complete master facilities plans on a regular and recurring basis to assess the overall condition of their school facilities. To develop such a plan requires the completion of a Facilities Condition Index (FCI) assessment to ascertain the material condition of every District-managed school, as well as the completion of a ten-year enrollment study. The FCI report was conducted by Jacobs Engineering Group beginning in the spring of 2018. A copy of this report, with all associated life cycle replacement costs for major building components, was provided to the COJ Finance Department at their request on Tuesday, June 18, 2019.

During this same time period, an enrollment study was completed by Cooperative Strategies, a subcontractor to Jacobs Engineering's FCI study. The ten-year Enrollment Projection final report was completed March 6, 2019. This report considered live birth data, census data, historical enrollment by grade, by school, as well as building permits filed. Many factors such as economic, magnet/charter/private school openings, unplanned new housing activity, and other items can significantly change student enrollment projections. For this reason, the School Board has directed the District to conduct enrollment projections every five years to account for any changes in these factors.

In keeping with the School Board's directive to complete an enrollment projection every five years the chart below identifies student enrollment and projections from 2014-2024:

Year	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24
District	120,111	119,550	118,403	117,101	116,057	115,228	115,026	114,671	114,267	113,865
Charter	10,751	11,946	12,913	14,368	16,500	17,776	19,078	20,614	21,762	22,844
Total	130,862	131,496	131,316	131,469	132,557	133,004	134,104	135,285	136,029	136,709

*Includes: regular, alternative, ESE, and special program students

The combination of the facilities condition study and the enrollment study provide the basis for making short-term and long-term facility decisions. Cooperative strategies used this data to make initial recommendations for community review. These recommendations were shared through community meetings within each Board Member District. In total, 20 community meetings were held for the FCI and Master Facilities Plan. Community input was collected at each meeting. In addition, a website was established for community members to provide their input online.

Using recommendations from Cooperative Strategies, input from the community, and feedback from the Board, the Superintendent developed the District Master Facility Plan which focuses on five guiding principles. The first priority of the plan is completing security improvements at every school in the District with the exception of schools being demolished. Schools being demolished will receive their safety and security work within their new replacement school. Once the safety

and security work is funded and well underway, then the remaining project work will continue based upon prioritization utilizing the remaining guiding principles within the Master Facilities Plan. The remaining guiding principles are eliminating the maintenance backlog (FCI Reduction), replacing aged and inefficient school buildings (Reduction in Age), consolidating small schools to increase resources (Reduction in Seats), and removing portables (Removal of Portables). The District will also consider Operational Savings as criteria for prioritization to help ensure the project priority will have emphasis on the reduction of annual operational costs. The five criteria are equally weighted at 20 points each for a total score of 100 points as shown in the table below with example school scores.

	Reduction in FCI	Reduction in Age	Reduction of Seats	Removal of Portables	Operational Savings	Total Score
	20	20	20	20	20	100
High Score Example	8.8	11.3	13.5	1.9	20	55.5
Median Score Example	7.5	9.8	5.6	0	10	32.9
Lower Score Example	10.6	0	0	0	0	10.6

The highest ranked projects within each Board Member district will be identified for the first phase of the District Facility Master Plan subject to the availability of funds from an initial bond offering and revenue expected within the first five years of the plan. This plan constructs or replaces on site 28 schools and involves the consolidation of 21 schools. The consolidation process will include community engagement involving stakeholder meetings and working groups to provide the Board input on any proposed boundary change for schools that will be consolidated. Deferred maintenance will be eliminated at all schools, and every school will be funded for school hardening safety and security upgrades. The ultimate end result is the provision of an improved learning environment for all students.

With the oldest schools in the State of Florida, the day-to-day maintenance needs of our schools cost approximately \$500,000 per month. The FCI costs are currently \$243 million as of Fall of 2018 with a projection of \$1.08 billion by 2023. The condition of critical systems -- mechanical, electrical, plumbing, structural and roofing -- is different at every school. The engineering study provides that detail. Decisions to close or consolidate schools were based on projected utilization and the facility condition report. Sites selected for rebuilds of the consolidated schools were chosen primarily for the availability of acreage to accommodate a 21st century school built to current codes capable of supporting modern educational requirements. We estimate that through consolidation and new construction, the District will have a cost avoidance of \$314 million of deferred maintenance, utility, and support costs. The total district-wide need within the Master Facilities Plan equals \$1.9 billion. The distribution of funds to each Board District was based on the identified FCI deferred maintenance cost, security enhancements, new construction, modernization and renovation costs for each Board Member District. The chart below outlines the funding level for each Board Member District and illuminates the relative condition of schools in board sections of the city.

Board Member District	Council Districts	Total Funding	Percentage of Total Budget
District 1 Honorable Cheryl Grymes	1 & 2	\$129,171,692	6.8%
District 2 Honorable Elizabeth Andersen	3 & 13	\$172,364,466	9.0%
District 3 Honorable Ashley Smith Juarez	4 & 5	\$321,818,485	16.9%
District 4 Honorable Darryl Willie	7 & 8	\$458,785,417	24.0%
District 5 Honorable Warren Jones	9 & 10	\$401,811,073	21.0%
District 6 Honorable Charlotte Joyce	12 & 14	\$219,781,732	11.5%
District 7 Honorable Lori Hershey	6 & 11	\$207,125,880	10.8%

The District is committed to removing closed, unused schools to prevent neighborhood blight. There are two exceptions to this plan. Based on community input and the historic nature of the school building, Ortega Elementary School will be sold as is. Lake Forest Elementary School will be retained by the District to provide a location for early child learning center. The remaining schools will be removed.

Regarding new construction due to area growth, the school district abides by the Interlocal agreement between the District and the cities within Duval County in implementing concurrency. To date, the District has not received any funding from residential development in Duval County. Other counties rely on impact fees and other capital funding options to offset their capital needs.

The student generation rate per new construction home is specifically outlined in this document and is used by the District to calculate the number of students that will be generated in all new subdivisions and developments. These projections are then used by the District to ascertain projected student enrollment numbers in the surrounding schools. As local residential development projects are approved by the City's Joint Planning Committee (JPC) and permits are issued, the revised projections will be included in subsequent enrollment studies.

INDEPENDENT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

(Response to: *Salem, Item 2; Freeman, Item 1*)

Section Four of the Board’s resolution (attached for convenience) provides for an Independent Oversight Committee (“Oversight Committee”) of volunteers for the purpose of monitoring and providing advice regarding the implementation of the approved plan. The membership of the Oversight Committee will be established by School Board Policy. The attorney assigned to the Board by the Office of General Counsel is assisting the Board with a draft policy which will establish the specific details including composition of the Committee. The Committee shall be effective upon approval of the sales surtax and extend through the date of completion of the projects funded under the plan.

FINANCE

(Response to: Bowman, Items 7, 8 & 14; DeFoor, Items 4, 5, 6 & 7; Diamond, Items 1, 5 & 6; Ferraro, Items 1, 2, 7 & 9; Cumber 1, 2, & 5; Priestly Jackson, Item 13; Freeman, Item 3)

Proposed District Sales Tax

Duval County Public Schools has the oldest school buildings in Florida but remains one of the only major districts without a local revenue source to fund its facility plan (see Appendix A of the Master Facility Plan). When the nation entered the recession, the Florida Legislature reduced the millage districts were able to leverage to support capital/facility improvements from 2.0 mills to 1.75 mills (2008) to 1.5 mills (2009). Today the 0.5 mill would generate approximately 30 million dollars a year; for the past 10 years that approximates a \$300 million aggregate reduction in district capital funds to address facility issues. This reduction, coupled with the lack of additional funding sources to support facilities, has resulted in our current deferred maintenance level of \$243 million and the need for implementation of this comprehensive plan.

The sales tax referendum contemplates raising funds for capital projects for the District. Use of existing funds for capital projects are governed by Florida Statutes and State Requirements for Educational Facilities (contained in Section 423 of the Florida Building Code). We anticipate that generated funds would be sufficient to cover the capital projects and debt service.

Based on a conservative estimate of \$96 million initially generated through the sales tax and a modest 2 percent increase annually after the initial year, we expect to generate approximately \$1.66 billion over 15 years to fund the capital projects and the debt service. Should the half-cent sales tax only generate \$80 million initially and the annual growth rate is limited to 2 percent, we anticipate that approximately \$1.38 billion in proceeds would be generated to fund the capital projects and debt service. As sales-tax funded capital projects are completed, we anticipate that other capital funds would be available that normally fund the existing maintenance backlog to eliminate any gap in funding. Any funds generated by the half-cent sales tax will be expended in accordance with the authorized uses set forth in Section 212.055(6)(c), Florida Statutes and the Board's approved resolution.

We anticipate increased growth in the economy and, as a result, growth in sales tax revenue and property tax revenue. In September 2018, the Legislative Office of Economic and Demographic Research prepared a Long-Range Financial Outlook report and projected growth rates in the Certified School Taxable Value for 2019-2024 ranging from 5.42 percent to 5.64 percent (http://edr.state.fl.us/Content/long-range-financial-outlook/3-Year-Plan_Fall-2018_1920-2122.pdf, p. 71).

Currently, the non-voted millage rate the District is allowed to levy is 1.5 mills. The amount generated from local property taxes is dependent on the value of the tax roll as certified by the Property Appraiser. Any funds generated by the local property taxes for capital will be expended in accordance with the authorized uses set forth in Section 1011.71, Florida Statutes.

District Funding

The \$436,383,186 in local revenue reported in our 2017-2018 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) represents 35.42% of all revenue (excluding Other Financing Sources). Should the discretionary sales tax pass, we anticipate that an additional \$96 million in local funds would be initially generated. Local revenues are estimated to be \$532,383,186, or 40.09% of estimated total revenues (\$1,327,933,853).

The 2019-2020 tentative budget to be approved by the School Board is \$1,819,125,972 (includes transfers and fund balance). Should the discretionary sales surtax pass, we anticipate the annual budget to increase by \$96 million initially to \$1,915,125,972.

For the 2018-2019 fiscal year, capital project revenues received for capital projects for schools and facilities directly operated by the District (not including public charter schools) totaled \$108,566,293.10. Repair and renovation of school buildings are not the sole use of capital funds. These dollars are also used for maintaining educational technology, expenses related to school buses, and similar purposes

2018-2019 Capital Projects for District Schools & Facilities

CO & DS Distribution	\$ 4,210,102.52
PECO	2,680,272.00
Gas Tax	229,844.67
Total State	\$ 7,120,219.19
Local Capital Tax	\$ 99,628,714.29
Tax Redemptions	578,808.45
Interest	1,218,638.94
City of Jacksonville -Bartram Park DRI	4,600.00
E-Payables Rebate	10,479.07
Refund of Prior Year Expenditures	4,833.16
Total Local	\$101,446,073.91
Total District Revenue in Capital Funds	\$108,566,293.10

For the 2019-2020 fiscal year, the District will not receive any PECO funding for district-managed schools and we anticipate the Local Capital Tax will generate \$107,750,980.

For the 2018-2019 fiscal year, the District was allocated \$4,839,149 in School Recognition Funds (\$100/student payable to qualified schools pursuant to Section 1008.36, Florida Statutes) and \$4,770,447 was allocated to qualified schools.

The District was also allocated \$450,700 in discretionary Florida Lottery funds. From the \$450,700, the District is required to allocate up to \$5 per unweighted student to be used at the discretion of the school advisory council pursuant to Section 24.121(5), Florida Statutes. If funds are insufficient to provide \$5 per unweighted student, the available funds shall be prorated. All \$450,700 was allocated to schools for use by the school advisory council.

Charter Funding

Charter school capital outlay funding and eligibility to receive such funding is governed by Section 1013.62, Florida Statutes. The calculation methodology for the Florida Department of Education used to allocate state funds appropriated in the General Appropriations Act is provided in the same Section of the Florida Statutes. For the 2018-2019 fiscal year, capital project revenues received for and paid exclusively to charter schools totaled \$7,893,111, which consists only of PECO distributions from the state.

Debt

The District has continued to rely on PFM Financial Advisors, LLC, the same financial consultants used by the City. Based on an analysis by PFM, the District does not expect the potential issuance of \$500 million of debt by the District, supported by a new sales surtax, to adversely affect the City's credit ratings. For additional information, the City should contact their financial advisors and ratings agencies.

With respect to coordinating with City Financial offices, the City and the School District do not coordinate issuance of debt as each entity is independent and has capacity to issue debt under the law. By way of example, the City's recent issuance of \$74 million Special Revenue Bonds, Series 2018, issued September 2018, was not coordinated with the District's financial offices.

Referendum

Section 212.054(7)(a), Florida Statutes requires the School Board to notify the Florida Department of Revenue within 10 days after final adoption by ordinance or referendum of an imposition, termination, or rate change of the surtax, but no later than November 16 prior to the effective date. The notice must specify the time period during which the surtax will be in effect and the rate and must include a copy of the ordinance and such other information as the department requires by rule. In addition, the Section requires the School Board to notify the Florida Department of Revenue by October 1 if the referendum or consideration of the ordinance that would result in imposition, termination, or rate change of the surtax is scheduled to occur on or after October 1 of that year. We provided the Florida Department of Revenue with a copy of the Board's resolution in May 2019 and fully intend on complying with this timeline and will consult the Florida Department of Revenue for guidance.

SREF & CHARTER ALLOCATIONS

(Response to: *Hazouri, Items 2 & 3; Salem, Items 3 & 4; Bowman, Items 3, 5, & 6; DeFoor, Item 8; Diamond, Items 4 & 7; Ferraro, Items 6 & 8; Cumber 1,4, &15; Priestly Jackson, Items 5, 6, 7 & 9; Pittman, Items 3 & 4*)

Charter Schools

The State Requirements for Educational Facilities (SREF) was specifically written to capture and institutionalize best practices and lessons learned with respect to school safety and quality. A 2017 report from the Office of Program Policy Analysis & Government Accountability (OPPAGA) concluded that no compelling reason existed to eliminate SREF and that most school districts supported retaining SREF. The OPPAGA report stated that SREF provides real value for school districts in terms of student safety, facility longevity, facility quality, and school uniformity. With the average age of Duval County Public Schools' facilities now approaching 45 years on a square foot basis, the SREF requirement to build for longevity and quality has benefited students, teachers, and the community as a whole.

State Requirements for Educational Facilities (SREF)

Some specific differences between SREF and other Florida Building Codes (FBC) are SREF's requirement for larger classroom sizes, the non-SREF FBC's allow for smaller classrooms. The larger classrooms required by SREF provide additional square footage to enhance the learning environment and to increase class sizes to accommodate enrollment surges which can be critical at times. The District had 50 schools with 90% or greater enrollment this year which typically requires larger class sizes for specific grades within those schools. Because district-managed public schools have school boundaries that assign specific homes to specific schools, district-managed public schools must accept additional students from within their boundaries whenever they show up to be enrolled. Meanwhile, public charter schools have enrollment caps and do not have assigned boundaries. Once a charter school reaches capacity, it has the ability to turn away students that they cannot handle due to capacity constraints. This allows charter schools to build smaller classrooms per non-SREF Florida Building Code requirements. Enrollment surges have occurred without warning in the past within Duval County when a charter or private school closes unexpectedly during the school year.

SREF also requires that traditional public schools are constructed to meet public shelter requirements when required by local governments. The non-SREF Florida Building Codes do not have this requirement. The public requirement is estimated to add up to 7% to the cost of construction for new schools and the school district bears this cost. Were this requirement eliminated, then the additional cost would have to be borne by local governments requiring the shelters. There are many more differences such as safety requirements for the construction of bus loops, parent drop-off loops, and student parking and lighting that enhance student safety. These differences are not required by non-SREF FBC's.

Charter School Allocation

It is the Board's desire to make available to charter schools a portion of the proceeds from the sales tax levy through a non-competitive Sales Tax Allocation based on the guiding principles outlined in the Board's Master Facilities Plan. Currently the recommendation being considered includes each charter school receiving \$5.00/per square foot, an amount equal to district-managed schools to be used for safety and security improvements. This will allow charter schools to address existing and anticipated capital related improvements related to safety and security. At \$5.00/square foot, a 70,000 sq ft. charter school could receive \$350,000 over 15-year period.

In keeping with the guiding principles set forth in the Master Facilities Plan, surtax funds to address facility deficiencies and improvements based on FCI will be allocated to charter schools based on like age of traditional public schools. All eligible operator-owned charter schools will be eligible to receive funding comparable to district schools to support FCI needs. The District has identified Waterleaf Elementary, an elementary school eight years old, as the comparative school. Based on the school's size, the school is slated to receive approximately \$923,000: \$517,000 for safety and security and approximately \$406,000 dollars to address the school's FCI improvement needs. By comparison, River City Science Elementary Academy, an owner-operated charter school has operated in the District for 9 years. Using a District school for comparison, River City Science Elementary could receive an estimated \$456,346 in funds to support its FCI needs. Charter schools seeking this funding would be required to properly document their FCI needs using the same FCI process employed by district-managed schools, beginning with an engineering study through a district-approved vendor.

Although charter schools have not provided actual square footage to the District, at \$5 per square foot, an estimated 70,000 sq/ft facility would generate an additional \$350,000 for safety and security. This would result in a total estimated surtax allocation of approximately \$806,346. Combined with PECO funding over a 15-year period, in this example the charter school could receive approximately \$4.5 million for capital expenses. The chart on the next page provides the estimated capital revenue during the 15-year period of the surtax.

Calculations for eligible capital improvements for charter schools in leased facilities will follow a similar calculation. The amount eligible to charter schools in leased facilities for FCI improvements is .5 of the FCI calculation. An example of funding for an eligible leased facility is provided in the table, as well. Use of funds will be restricted to capital outlay projects that are not fixed in nature such as security and equipment. Schools in leased facilities will be prohibited from purchasing or constructing new schools or additions to existing schools, or purchasing non-removable assets. In the event the school closes, all assets purchased with sales tax revenues will revert to the District at the District's discretion. The Board may consider other requirements consistent with its approved resolution prior to executing a final agreement with each eligible charter school.

Example:

Category	River City Science Academy Elementary (Owner Operated)	Global Outreach Charter Academy (Lease)	Waterleaf Elementary (District-Managed)
Facility Age	9 years	10 years	8 years
PECO ¹	\$3,683,310	\$7,444,305	\$0
Safety and Security ² (\$5/sq. ft)	\$350,000	\$350,000	\$517,560
FCI	\$456,346 ³	\$253,525 ⁴	\$405,641
Total	\$4,489,656	\$8,047,830	\$923,201

¹ PECO funding is an annual allotment – projections were based on River City Science’s allotment of \$245,554 and Global’s allotment of \$496,287 for the 2019-2020 school year multiplied by 15 years, the duration of the sales tax levy

² Estimates for square footage were based on a hypothetical value of 70,000 sq/ft

³ FCI estimates were projected based on the age of the facility in relation to Waterleaf’s FCI prorated annually by the age of the school (\$405,641/8 years = \$ 50,705.13 per year, multiplied by 9, the age of River City Science Academy Elementary.)

⁴ FCI estimates were projected based on the age of the facility in relation to Waterleaf’s FCI prorated annually by the age of the school (\$405,641/8 years = \$ 50,705.13 per year, multiplied by 10, the age of Global Outreach Charter Academy, then multiplied by .5.)

Questions were also raised regarding why the District will not share funds on a per-student allocation. Currently, capital funds are allocated based on capital need, not on a per-student formula. For example, the cost of a roof replacement does not consider the number of students in the building. It only takes in account of the cost of materials and labor needed to replace the roof. The charter allocation as recommended ensures the fidelity of the Board’s resolution by expending funds to improve safety and security as well as addressing the maintenance and repair needs for existing public facilities.

CAMPAIGN & MESSAGING

(Response to: *Boylan, Items 1, 2 & 3; Salem, Item 1; Bowman, Items 1 & 2; Wilson, Items 3, 4 & 6; Cumber, Items 1*)

Several council members provided a list of questions regarding the School District's plans and capacity for implementing a successful referendum campaign. State regulations prevent school district personnel from leading, managing, or even advocating for a campaign. The District's primary responsibility is to inform voters about the issue, the needs of the District, and its facility plans. The community education effort began with the public dialog surrounding the Facility Condition Index report and the various iterations of the Master Facilities Plan.

In the process of educating the public about the facility needs, the plan, and need for a revenue source, the District has already held dozens of large and small community meetings, met extensively with city officials, posted online videos and slide shows of proposed plans, and constructed a website, www.ourduvalschools.org.

Once a ballot date is certain, a referendum campaign will be the responsibility of a private citizen group, not the school district. This private citizen group would form a Political Action Committee (PAC), and the PAC would be responsible for running the campaign. The School Board and the District are following models successful in other districts. With respect to questions regarding voter turnout, St. Lucie County recently approved their supervisor of elections to conduct a mail-in ballot for their school district's special referendum for millage. Mail-in ballots are significantly less expensive, and the turnout in St. Lucie was an impressive 32 percent because of the ease of voting.

OTHER POLICY & OPERATIONS ITEMS

(Response to: *Bowman, Items 9, 10, 13 & 15; Ferraro, Items 3, 4 & 5; and Priestly Jackson, Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 10, 11 & 12; Pittman, Item 1*)

Council members submitted several questions about school district operations and policy in addition to those directly about the master facility plan and the referendum. These questions touched on a diversity of issues including but not limited to desegregation, student transportation, plans for the District's current administration building, and support for charter schools. Many of the questions proposed would require significant research and personnel time to explore fully, but to the best of our ability to expedite action on the proposed referendum, those issues are briefly addressed below:

- **Administration Building** - We remain open to moving the District administration building off the current river location. We recently completed an external appraisal of our building and the Board will discuss this further at a future workshop. It should be emphasized that the current building imposes no operational cost to the District. We do not have a lease payment or debt payment on the building, and this condition of being *fully paid for* is a tremendous advantage to our annual operating budget. Any future solution which would move the District administration off the river must not have a negative economic impact on the District or taxpayers. A lease arrangement that would divert dollars from instructional operations is not acceptable. The District continues to be open to potential solutions that have no adverse economic impact and that provide a central access point for our constituents.
- **OPPAGA** - Initiating the statutorily required study from Florida Office of Program and Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) is a School Board responsibility. District staff engaged OPPAGA two months prior to the School Board's approval of the resolution for a referendum on May 7. Immediately following the Board's vote, OPPAGA received a copy of the Board's executed resolution. The Board action initiating the OPPAGA study and the communication with OPPAGA were completed with ample time to complete the process prior to the proposed November referendum date. Most recent communication from OPPAGA indicates that they are prepared to complete the required audit in time for this matter to appear on a 2019 ballot. This assurance that the study could be timely completed was most recently relayed to the Office of the Superintendent from OPPAGA in an email dated July 24, 2019.
- **Charter Operators in Duval County** - Duval County Public Schools includes more than 30 charter schools available to students and families as one of a number of school choices. The District and Board follow all state required processes to enable charter schools to operate in accordance with law. Since July 2018, the District has recommended and the Board has approved eight charter school contract renewals and four contracts for new charter schools or charter school locations. For many parents, their first choice is a

neighborhood school or a specialized school within the District. Therefore, it is imperative to also offer comprehensive district-managed public schools that enthusiastically serve the needs of all children. It is the District's goal that all district-managed schools remain or continue to progress toward becoming high-performing schools that serve all children and provide multiple pathways to success. We continue to make positive progress toward that goal.

- **Transportation** - Duval County Public Schools offers families a tremendous commitment to transportation that meets or exceeds state legal requirements. While the state requires the District to provide bus transportation to District-operated schools beyond a two-mile radius from the school to the home within the school's boundary, Duval County students who live more than 1.5 miles from their neighborhood school receive bus transportation at no cost to the family. In addition, the District provides an extensive network of magnet school transportation that enables districtwide school choice regardless of parents' ability to transport students.
- **Academic Accountability** - In the school accountability era, Duval County Public Schools has demonstrated tremendous achievement and improvement. As examples, this school district was recognized as one of the best urban school districts in the nation following results of the most recent national assessments. Duval's fourth grade mathematics students were number one in the nation of those districts that participated in the sample. The graduation rate for our District continues to improve to record highs. Nearly all our traditional high schools have a graduation rate of greater than 90 percent. In state assessments, Duval County Public Schools is a fraction of a percentage point from being an "A" school district and has been one of the fastest improving districts in the state.
- **Administrative Overhead** - Duval County Public Schools has achieved these results through an intense focus on classroom instruction, school leadership, and school operations. District administrative staff represent only 6 percent of all 13,000+ District personnel.
- **Transfer between Funds** - If the questions regarding administrative costs are meant to suggest that administrative dollars could be transferred to capital funding, the question is based on a false premise. Operating dollars and capital dollars come from two separate sources. Development of the annual budget in which operating dollars are distributed according to the strategic directions of the district remains a function of the Duval County School Board in close working relationship with the district administration. Ultimate accountability for strategic and budget decisions is manifest in Florida's rigorous accountability system in which the Duval County Public Schools continues to excel.

- **School District History, Desegregation, and Related Questions** - Many of the questions in this category will require extensive historical research and staff time to accurately address.

While many of the other questions require extensive research, the Master Facilities Plan is designed to improve equity among schools throughout Duval County. By focusing on the condition of each building as the primary factor driving investment, the plan ensures that all schools get the resources needed to provide students with an outstanding learning environment.

Under the plan:

- All schools will receive funding for safety and security improvements.
- Portables will be significantly reduced if not eliminated.
- All backlogged maintenance will be eliminated.
- Every student in Duval County will experience an improved educational environment.

The Master Facility Plan is predicated on the extensive engineering study that comprises the Facility Condition Index report. That report, in conjunction with extensive community dialog, underlies the final recommendations in the plan and the opportunity for Duval County to provide its students and teachers with the same high-quality learning environments afforded students throughout the First Coast and the state of Florida.

Other

(Response to: *Bowman, Item 12*)

The school district has been asked why this tax will be a one-time event and to describe the changes in procedures to ensure buildings will be correctly maintained in the future, how we will close and consolidate schools that “do not justify being operational” and lessons learned to ensure this does not happen again.

First and foremost, it is important to recognize that all district-managed buildings have remained safe and operational under current building code despite the cuts previously outlined. In fact, our maintenance department has done a yeoman’s job of finding efficiencies and patching systems on a shoestring budget. The District has demonstrated excellent stewardship of taxpayer dollars, and the situation that we find ourselves in now is a direct result of austere recessionary budget reductions over the past decade coupled with the lack of an additional revenue stream.

The state budget was cut during the recession due to a shortage of incoming tax dollars. As a result, school budgets, including capital funds for facilities, were proportionately cut. These reductions resulted in a backlog of school minor and major maintenance. We were aware that this was a short-term situation and everyone in the state was suffering during the economic downturn. Although it was not an ideal solution, we understood that everyone had to do their part to cut back and that those issues would be addressed when the economy improved.

In 2008, the state legislature reduced the amount of funding districts could levy from 2.00 mills down to 1.75 and finally to 1.50 mills in 2009. This reduction in funding further exacerbated the capital funding issue, and the list of maintenance issues grew.

The cuts by the school district were not solely confined to capital expenses. For example, you may recall the public outcry to cuts in art, music, physical education, athletics, media services, and magnet transportation that were made during that time.

Jacksonville now enjoys a robust economy. Throughout the city, revitalization is occurring. At this time there is no reason that our schools should not be similarly revitalized, with priority properly placed on safety and security. It is well documented that cities with strong educational systems attract families and businesses to the community and contribute to the overall advancement of the city. Through state increases in operational dollars, we have been able to make some progress in restoring art and music to all schools, and busing services have been returned to prior levels. Capital funding has not been similarly restored, and the school district will not be able to meet our maintenance needs with existing funding.

Regarding the question about what we will do to make sure this never happens again, we cannot control future funding cutbacks or reductions at the state level. We will remain committed to good financial stewardship of taxpayer funds and available resources. Our elected School Board will continue to advocate for the needs of schools at tall levels. It is up to the School Board to determine existing needs, whether that is additional funding through a sales tax referendum or an additional half mill for much-needed operational expenses such as addressing the salaries of our teachers and continued recruitment and retention of high performing instructional personnel.

There is a path to provide an adequate stream of capital funding for the future needs of our schools. With the consolidation and closure of under-utilized schools, we are happy to work with the city to revise and adjust existing concurrency regulations that could be a long-term solution for addressing ongoing funding for capital needs.

We remain open to continued collaboration and hopeful that we can resolve any remaining issues so that everyone involved can be comfortable that this initiative is not only good for our children, but also the right thing for our community as a whole.